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CDC HAN Info Service Message

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CDC/Aventis Pasteur Collaborate To Ship More Than 2 Million Doses of Influenza Vaccine to Providers Who Serve High-Priority Groups

More than 2 million doses of influenza vaccine were shipped this week by Aventis Pasteur to health care providers throughout the country who serve the high-priority groups recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to receive influenza vaccine during the 2004-2005 season.

After pairing CDC information on geographic locations of high-priority risk groups and Aventis Pasteur US information on providers scheduled to receive vaccine for the high-risk populations, this round of influenza vaccine went to:

- * Veterans Administration
- * Long-term Care Facilities/Acute Care Hospitals
- * State Public Health Officials
- * Vaccines for Children Program
- * Private Providers Who Care for Young Children

"More doses of vaccine will be going out over the next 6-7 weeks so there will be more opportunity for those who need the vaccine to get it in time for this year's influenza season," said CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding. "This shortage is frightening to people and they're rushing out and standing in long lines thinking they need the vaccine right now before it's all gone. We want them to know that more is coming, so as hard as it may be, please try and be patient and check with your provider ahead of time for availability of vaccine in your area."

To ensure that providers who ordered vaccine from Chiron this year get also get some of the vaccine they need for priority populations, CDC and Aventis are taking these actions:

- o filling remaining Vaccines For Children (VFC) orders to Aventis Pasteur.
- o contacting states that ordered vaccine from Chiron distributors to begin re-directing their orders to Aventis Pasteur.
- o collaborating with Chiron distributors to identify providers to high-priority populations including long-term care facilities, hospitals, and primary care and specialty physicians.
- o working with the Visiting Nurses Association of America to ensure high-priority populations it serves are immunized as recommended.

For the 2004-2005 influenza season, Aventis Pasteur produced 55.4 million doses of vaccine. Before the Chiron announcement on October 5, 2004, approximately 33 million doses had already been shipped to pediatricians, primary care and other office-based physicians, as well as to public health providers.

On October 5, 2004, CDC announced priority groups for vaccination with inactivated influenza vaccine for the 2004-2005 influenza season:

- * all children aged 6-23 months,
- * adults aged 65 years and older,
- * persons aged 2-64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions,
- * all women who will be pregnant during influenza season,
- * residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities,
- * children 6 months-18 years of age on chronic aspirin therapy,
- * health-care workers with direct patient care, and
- * out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged <6 months.

Influenza season typically peaks in the United States between December and March. Because each season is unpredictable, it's not known how severe the 2004-2005 season might be.

Although vaccination is the best protection against influenza, everyone can take practical steps to help prevent spread of flu, such as avoiding close contact with people who are sick and keeping your distance from others if you're sick; when possible, staying home from work, school, and errands when you are sick; covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and cleaning your hands often.

For more information about the flu and this year's recommendations, visit the CDC Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

##This Message was distributed to State and Local Health Officers, Public Information Officers, Laboratory Directors, Weapons of Mass Destruction Coordinators, Epidemiologists and HAN Coordinators as well as Association and Clinician organizations##

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